

FEB 05 2007

Application No. 10/677,022

02/05/2007 15:09 FAX

MERCHANT & GOULD

015/016

REMARKS

Applicants have received and reviewed the Office Action mailed November 3, 2006. By way of response, Applicants have canceled claims 6 and 21 without prejudice and amended claims 1, 7-9, 15-16, 22-24, 26-27, 30, 32-33, 36, and 39. No new matter was added. Applicants submit that the amended claims are supported by the specification. Claims 1-5, 7-20, and 22-45 are pending. Claims 1-5, 7-20, 22-25, and 27-29 have been examined. Claims 26 and 30-45 are withdrawn.

For the reasons given below, Applicants submit that the amended claims are in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge and appreciate that the Examiner indicated that claims 6-9 and 21-24 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Allowable claim 6 depended from claim 1. Claim 1 now includes the subject matter of claim 6. Allowable claim 21 depended from claim 1. Claim 16 now includes the subject matter of claim 21. Accordingly, claim 1, and its dependent claims 2-5 and 7-15, and claim 16, and its dependent claims 17-20 and 22-25, are in condition for allowance. Notification to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Rejection of Claims Under § 102(b) or 103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 10-20, 25, and 27-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Timofeev et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 6 and 21 were not subject to this rejection. Claim 6 depended from claim 1. Claim 1 now includes the subject matter of claim 6. Claim 21 depended from claim 1. Claim 16 now includes the subject matter of claim 21. Accordingly, claim 1, and its dependent claims 2-5 and 7-15, and claim 16, and its dependent claims 17-20 and 22-25, are in condition for allowance. Notification to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Independent claim 27, from which claims 28 and 29 depend, includes the subject matter of claim 6 or 21. Accordingly, claim 27 is no longer subject to this rejection.

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Claims 27-29 are in condition for allowance, and notification to that effect is earnestly solicited.

The independent claims were amended solely to expedite prosecution of the present application and not to acquiesce to the rejection. Applicants reserve the right to pursue additional subject matter in one or more continuation of divisional applications.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that the amended claims are neither taught nor suggested by the longer subject to this rejection and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

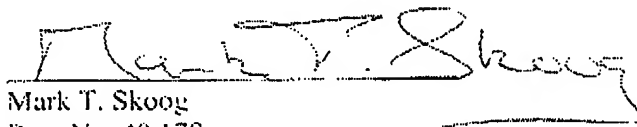
Summary

In light of the above, the Applicant respectfully submits that each of claims 1-5, 6-20, 22-25, and 27-29 is in condition for allowance. Prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowance in this case is courteously solicited. If the Examiner feels that prosecution of the present application can be materially advanced by a telephonic interview, the undersigned would welcome a call at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: 5 Feb '07


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